Medical Assistance to Iraq

5038. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Iraq has requested the Government of India to provide medical assistance to the war afflicted people;

(b) if so. Government's reaction thereto;and

(c) by when such assistance is proposed to be provided together with the nature and quantum of assistance to be provided?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA) : (a) No.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Fight against terrorism and organized crime

5039. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government agree that terrorism and organized crime are global threat;

(b) if so. whether Government also agree that international cooperation is required to solve these problems;

(c) if so. whether Government have taken any steps in this regard; and

(d) if so. the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) and (b) Yes.

(c) and (d) Government has taken a number of steps in this regard including cooperation under Joint Working Groups with a number of countries on combating terrorism; being a party to UN sectoral conventions on terrorism and the Convention on Trans-national Organized Crime; advancing a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) and tackling these threats through bilateral cooperation.

Criteria for categorisation of dancers in ICCR

5040. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Indian Council for Cultural Relations has prescribed specific criteria and procedure for categorisation of dancers for sponsoring them for concert tours abroad;

(b) If so, the criteria and the procedure, when these were formulated and whether these have been publicised and strictly followed; and

(c) whether the ICCR has any empanelment Committees and if so, the names of the members of these Committees from time to time along their qualification ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) Yes.

(b) Dancers desirous of inclusion in ICCR's 'Reference Panel' must apply on the prescribed form, furnishing the necessary details about their dance training and carrier along with the latest video recordings of their performances. Each application is considered by an Expert Committee on dance which then forwards its unanimous recommendation to the Empanelment Advisory Committee. The Empanelment Advisory Committee then unanimously decides on the inclusion of the applicant in the Reference Panel of dancers of ICCR. This procedure has been strictly followed since 1986.

(c) Yes. The Empanelment Advisory Committee includes performers, experts, critics and scholars as well as people eminent in the cultural field. In order to maintain the impartiality of the empanelment process it has not been found appropriate to publicise the names of the members of the Committee.

Contracts for reconstruction in Iraq

5041. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any initiatives have been taken to secure some major business contracts for India in reconstruction projects in Iraq;

(b) if so, the details thereof, especially for civil works like constructing airports, roads, hospitals and for railway construction works where the country has a major competitive advantage; and

(c) the estimate of the value of the re-construction work in Iraq?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA) : (a) and (b) In view of India's traditional friendship with the Iraqi people, India is keen to participate in the post-war reconstruction of Iraq. Indian companies have wide experience of working in Iraq in the 1970s and 1980s in areas such as civil construction, infrastructural projects, industrial rehabilitation and deployment of expert manpower. Different aspects of the situation in Iraq such a humanitarian relief, easing or lifting of sanctions, and a